

Who

is an  
English  
Language  
Learner?

A student whose first language was a language other than English. This can include a student born in the United States, but who first spoke another language such as Spanish.

OR

A student whose first language may be English, but who has grown up listening to others speak another language in the home or with a caretaker. A students such as this may have difficulty with specific sounds, or sentence structure where there are differences between the two languages. Typically a student in this group receives only minimal services, as needed.

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Snowline  
Joint  
Unified  
School  
District

ENGLISH  
LANGUAGE  
LEARNER  
SERVICES

A Guide for  
Parents

# HOW ARE ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS IDENTIFIED?

When parents first enroll their student in school they are asked to fill out a Home Language Survey. If a language, other than English, is indicated on this form, the student is given the California English Language Development Test (CELDT).

A student must score in the Early Advanced range with no subtests below Intermediate to be considered Fluent in English.

## Here are some typical parent concerns and questions:

### **I do not want my child to be labeled.**

Parents are sometimes reluctant to write anything but English on the Home Language Survey because they do not want their children singled out or labeled as something different. The majority of our English Learners are placed in regular grade level classes. It is not our intent to single out or label any child, no matter what services they may be receiving.

### **My child already speaks English.**

There are four areas to consider in English fluency: speaking, listening, reading, and writing. While a child may be able to communicate orally in English, there may be some difficulties when it comes to reading or writing—particularly when another language spoken in the home has different phonemic sounds, syntax, and sentence structures. Language barriers, such as these, can make it difficult for a child to fully access the core curriculum they need to be successful in school.

### **I do not want my child to be put in special programs. I want them to be in the regular classroom.**

Snowline School District places ALL students in regular classrooms. Regular core curriculum classes are generally a mix of students, and may include English learners, special education students, students who score below basic, or gifted and talented students. At times, these students receive different assignments, extra instruction or help from an instructional associate, based on their individual needs. Some grade levels group all students, according to their levels of understanding, for specific classes throughout the day.

### **I do not want my child to have English Language assistance.**

Parents DO have the right to request a waiver to have their child removed from a specific classroom with an English Learner cluster or a Structured English Immersion class. HOWEVER, if the child's CELDT score is not in the fluent range, parents cannot opt their child out of English Language Development which is taught as a part of their language arts program and is necessary for academic success.

### **Does Snowline offer a bilingual or two-way immersion class?**

No, currently the district does not offer such a class. These types of classes include instruction in *both* English and Spanish. However, parents may visit the school and request a waiver for a bilingual program. If there are enough requests for a bilingual program, the district will consider adding this.

### **What do English Language Services look like in the classroom?**

Based on the student's skills, a plan is made to ensure that your child becomes proficient in English.

The student receives specific instruction for learning English. Often this happens right within their regular class, at a center, or in a small grouping. Or it may be scheduled as an extra language arts class. In other core subjects, teachers utilize instructional strategies with the whole class which help to increase an English Learner's ability to understand and be successful. These strategies may include:

- introducing vocabulary first
- using pictures and visual cues
- checking for understanding

Generally speaking, these are good instructional practices for ALL students.

### **What will my child need to be able to do to reclassify as proficient in English?**

- Score at LEAST in the Early Advanced Range on the CELDT with no subtest scores below intermediate.
- Demonstrate ability on the CST comparable to an average English Only student.
- Meet academic standards set by the district. This would include benchmark assessments, overall classroom performance, and grades.
- Teachers and parents are both in agreement that the child is proficient enough to succeed in school.

### **How long will it take my child to become fluent in English?**

Each child is different. There are many factors that enter into it. But generally, it can take between 6 and 8 years to become fluent if the child is non-English speaking. If the child already has some English skills, then it may take less time.

### **Why do I have to sign this annual notification?**

The state requires that the district annually notify parents of English Learners about the placement of their child. This allows you the opportunity to request that your child be placed in a classroom where instruction is given in both Spanish and English. This is called the waiver process. Before filling out a waiver request, parents must first make an appointment with the principal to discuss their request.

### **What is CELDT?**

*Federal and state laws require a test that school districts must give to students whose home language is not English. This is the California English Language Development Test (CELDT).*

*The CELDT covers listening and speaking skills for students in kindergarten and grade 1. The test covers listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills for grades 2-12.*

*The CELDT must be given once each year to English learners until they become proficient in English.*